

April 2014



Grafton County, NH FSA Updates

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Grafton County FSA Office

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USDA'S Farm Service Agency (FSA) Offers Farm Bill Website And Online Overview Of Farm Bill Programs

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill and for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?

For more information on FSA, please contact the Grafton County USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov

New Farm Bill Offers Increased Opportunities For Producers

David Clement
Russell Keniston
Shirley Tullar

Next County Committee Meeting:
May 21, 2014 11:00am

NH Acting Farm Loan Manager:
Brian Kuper
brian.kuper@vt.usda.gov

Farm Loans:
The Concord Center
10 Ferry St Suite 212
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603-223-6003
Fax: 603-223-6030

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of loan term limits for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership down payments from \$225,000 to \$300,000.
- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guarantee amount on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the FSA Farm Bill website for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

USDA Announces The Extension Of The Milk Income Loss Contract Program For 2014

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced the extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which protects dairy farmers against income loss through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers (MPP) is operational.

Contracts for eligible producers enrolled in MILC on or before Sept. 30, 2013, are automatically extended until the termination date of the MILC program. Dairy operations with approved MILC contracts will continue to receive monthly payments if a payment rate is in effect.

MILC compensates enrolled dairy producers when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt), after adjustment for the cost of dairy feed rations. MILC payments are calculated each month using the latest milk price and feed cost, just as in the 2008 Farm Bill. The payment rate for October 2013 through January 2014 marketings is zero. Payment rates during the months after January 2014 until the termination of the MILC program will be determined as the appropriate data becomes available.

Producers who want to select a different production start month must visit their local FSA office between April 14, 2014, and May 30, 2014.

FSA will provide producers with information on program requirements, updates and sign-ups as the information becomes available.

New Farm Bill Provides Permanent Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that farmers and ranchers can sign-up for disaster assistance programs, reestablished and strengthened by the 2014 Farm Bill, beginning Tuesday, April 15, 2014.

LFP provides compensation to eligible producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought and fire. LIP provides compensation to livestock producers who suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the Federal Government or protected by Federal law, including wolves and avian predators.

As USDA begins implementing the livestock disaster assistance programs, producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

Many producers still have questions. USDA is in the process of interpreting Farm Bill program regulations. Thanks for your patience as USDA works diligently to put Farm Bill programs into action to benefit the farmers and ranchers of rural America.

USDA Enhances Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the expansion of the Farm Storage and Facility Loan program, which provides low-interest financing to producers. The enhanced program includes 22 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers.

Producers with small and mid-sized operations, and specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to needed capital for a variety of supplies including sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers, and waivers are available on a case-by-case basis for disaster assistance or insurance coverage if available products are not relevant or feasible for a particular producer.

Additionally, Farm Storage and Facility Loans security requirements have been eased for loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Previously, all loans in excess of \$50,000 required a promissory note and additional security, such as a lien on real estate. Now loans up to \$100,000 can be secured by only a promissory note.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for fruits and vegetables.

Contact the Grafton County FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more about FSA programs and loans, including the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.

Attention Farm Loan Borrowers

There is a new state statute requiring the name on your photo identification (e.g. driver's license) match with the name used to file a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). This UCC is put in place when you request a loan from FSA and renewed every 5 years. The UCC is a blanket lien taken against your chattels, equipment, etc. that you may have pledged for security.

The NH FSA Farm Loan Office is requesting that all borrowers send a copy of their photo identification to the office in Concord. Please mail a copy to: USDA/FSA, 10 Ferry St, Box 212, Concord, NH 03301.

If it is more convenient, you may stop by the Grafton County FSA Office. County Office Staff can copy your license and send the copy directly to the Concord Office. You could also either fax a copy of your license to 603-223-6030, or scan and email a copy of your license to sandra.carter@nh.usda.gov.

Selected Interest Rates for April 2014

Farm Operating Loans (including Microloans) - 2.00%

Farm Ownership Loans - Direct - 4.00%

Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.50%

Farm Ownership Loans - Direct - Joint Financing - 2.50%

Emergency Loans - 3.00%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 2.125%

Dates to Remember

Apr 14 - MILC relief period begins for start month changes

Apr 15 - Sign-up begins for LIP, LFP, ELAP, and TAP

May 21 - Grafton County COC Meeting - 11:00 am

May 26 - Memorial Day Holiday - Office Closed

May 30 - MILC relief period ends for start month changes

May 31 - Acreage Reporting Deadline for Ornamental Nursery

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).